

Meeting notes:

Mono Lake Widening Project (26990_) PDT Meeting 0900 2-7-2001

Self introduction of all the team members who were present

Project design engineer gave a brief description of the project as they are currently working on.

- 12 foot lanes and 8 foot shoulders, currently 12' lanes and 1' to 8' shoulders
- Move centerline away from cut slope to minimize disturbance on west side.
- Significant fills on east side would be either 2:1 slopes, or retaining walls of some type, or a combination of both.
- Rockfall issues are being investigated for an adequate solution
- Pull out locations need to be finalized, left turn pockets for them are not justified at this time based on most recent determinations
- Various drainage work, replacing all drainage systems on the project, and upgrading the large culvert at Tioga Lodge

Comments revolved around a few points such as turning movements at the Marina (lake access at south end of project limits), including left and right turn pockets for RVs and boat trailers, also look into possible future expansion. Overall, try to keep environmental disturbance to a minimum. Take a closer look at the large culvert at the Tioga Lodge, as its capacity may not need to be increased.

This drifted into a discussion of the original scope versus the current design direction. There was discussion about how scope changes compare to design changes. This is not a well defined boundary. The PDT will have to make the determination of whether or not we are drifting beyond the original scope. If it is determined that the project scope is being modified, then CT Management approval would be required before pursuing that direction. The Mono LTC would have to concur with any scope change approved by CT.

Four issues were brought up that may not have been addressed in the original scoping document. They are the Mono Inn and Tioga Lodge being opened for business, the designation of this route as a scenic byway, and the change in ownership of a private parcel. It was suggested that these issues would not effect the scope, but could impact the final design decisions. Primary concern seemed to be the effect of turning movements generated by the businesses and their impact on traffic safety.

Design speed was questioned, and explained, that current speed limit is set at 60, and that is CTs first choice for design speed, although a 55mph design speed is being considered in order to reduce impacts to three non-standard horizontal curves. Speeds are set by State Legislators at 55, and speed studies are performed in order to justify a change (either up or down) from that standard. This section's current legal speed limit is 60mph. Safety issues around the curve by the Cunningham property were discussed.

Guard rail alternatives were discussed briefly as to the types that could be used. Suggestions were to look into the 'see thru' types used up on the North Coast. Korten has been eliminated as an alternative based on a mandate from Sacramento. Rock walls were another alternative mentioned. The State has very little flexibility in this area, the railing chosen will have to meet State and Federal Standards.

Curve realignment was questioned as possibly being a scope change, however, the original scoping document does state that the centerline may be shifted up to 5 feet to improve the horizontal alignment.

Other alternatives were suggested for consideration, such as a combination of 4 and 8 foot shoulders, or 4 foot shoulders throughout, with a dedicated bike lane elsewhere. The 4 foot shoulders was brought up in regards to discussions about the type of retaining walls that might be used, and the USFS's desire to reduce the extent of the walls as much as possible. An extensive discussion about bike paths ensued, with no resolution or team consensus. County representatives appeared adamant about pursuing these options in the environmental process.

We talked about environmental processes in general. There was concern that an environmental public scoping meeting had not yet occurred. CT representatives felt that the initial open house to present the basic alternatives to the public and receive comments was considered the environmental scoping meeting. This is also the function of the PDT members (as representatives of the public and agencies) to recommend minor changes based on the original scope and comments from the public meeting. The eventual outcome of this discussion was to schedule another public meeting to allow the public another opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the project. Additional options, if in line with original scope, will be included in the environmental process. If they are not in line with original scope, they would not be pursued in conjunction with the current environmental process.

This brought us to a discussion of the schedule of the project. Currently there is a proposed schedule delay of 13 months. This is based on the alternatives that CT is currently working on. If that delay continues through the end of the project, the Ready to List (RTL, time that the project can be advertised for contracting to build it) date will not be within the STIP cycle in which the project is currently funded. We could lose the funding for this job. Any changes to the alternatives or scope would make this delay more inevitable. Efforts are being made to recoup some of this time from within CT's other functional units. However, due to the complexity of the issues on this job, it is unlikely that a 13-month delay can be reduced to no more than 6 months, which is what is needed to stay within the STIP cycle.

Action Items:

Juan Torres, Environmental Generalist: will set up a public meeting to fulfill the desire to be sure that we have an official public environmental scoping meeting.

Public meeting: Wednesday, March 7th at about 6PM try for the High School.

Tim Shultz, Project Manager: Schedule a follow up PDT meeting after the public meeting to discuss its outcome.

Next PDT: Wednesday, March 21st at 9AM in the USFS Conference room in Lee Vining (same place again)

Look at the issues brought up in regards to the current approved scope.

Internal Project Team will look into ways of reducing the current schedule to meet the current STIP cycle, total delay needs to be less than 6 months.

Scott Burns, Mono LTC Executive Director: Look into funding issues if the project is delayed beyond the current STIP cycle.

Design: will update the cost estimate for the job based on the four current alternatives, and will have this available at the public meeting. Evaluate the suggested alternative (4 foot shoulders) for cost and schedule impacts.

Traffic/Operations: will look at turning movement history and projections for the project limits and make recommendations at the next PDT meeting regarding turning movement improvements that may be warranted.